

SOME 1483

ARGUMENTS

Against enlarging the

Power of Bishops,

In letting of

LEASES.

WITH

Remarks on some Queries

Lately published.

By Jonathan Swift.

Mibi credite, major hæreditas venit unicuique vestram in iisdem bonis à jure & à legibus, quam ab ijs à quibus illa ipsa bona relicta sunt.

Cicero pro A. Cæcina.

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Some Arguments against enlarging the Power of Bishops, &c.

IN handling this Subject, I shall proceed wholly upon the Supposition, That those of our Party who profess themselves Members of the Church establish'd, and under the Apostolical Government of Bishops, do desire the Continuance and Transmission of it to Posterity, at least in as good a Condition as it is at present; because as this Discourse is not calculated for Dissenters of any kind, so neither will it suit the Talk or Sentiments of those Persons, who with the Denomination of Churchmen are Oppressors of the inferiour Clergy, and perpetually quarrelling at the great Incomes of the Bishops; which is a traditional Cant delivered down from former times, and continued with great Reason, although it is now near 200 Years since almost three Parts in four of the Church Revenues have been taken from the Clergy; besides the Spoils that have been gradually made ever since, of Glebes and other Lands, by the Confusion of Times, the Fraud of encroaching Neighbours, or the Power of Oppressors too great to be encountered.

About the time of the Reformation, many Popish Bishops of this Kingdom, knowing they must have
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been soon ejected if they would not change their Religion, made long Leases and Fee-farms of great Part of their Lands, reserving very inconsiderable Rents, sometimes only a Chiefry; by a Power they assumed, directly contrary to many antient Canons, yet consistent enough with the Common Law. This Trade held on for many Years after the Bishops became Protestants, and some of their Names are still remembred with Infamy, on Account of enriching their Families by such Sacrilegious Alienations. By these means, Episcopal Revenues were so low reduced, that three or four Sees were often united to make a tolerable Competency. For some Remedy to this Evil, King *James* the First, by a Bounty that became a good Christian King, bestowed several forfeited Lands on the Northern Bishopricks; but in all other Parts of the Kingdom, the Church continued still in the same Distress and Poverty; some of the Sees hardly possessing enough to maintain a Country Vicar. About the middle of King *Charles* the first's Reign, The Legislature here thought fit to put a stop at least to any farther Alienations; and so a Law was enacted, prohibiting all Bishops and other Ecclesiastical Corporations, from setting their Lands for above the Term of twenty one Years, the Rent reserved to be one half of the real Value of such Lands at the time they were set, without which Condition the Lease to be void.

Soon after the Restoration of King *Charles* the second, the Parliament taking into consideration the miserable Estate of the Church, certain Lands by way of Augmentation, were granted to eight Bishops in the Act of Settlement, and confirmed in the Act of Explanation; of which Bounty, as I remember, three Sees were in a great measure defeated;

ted; but by what Accidents, it is not here of any Importance to relate.

This at present is the Condition of the Church in *Ireland*, with Regard to Episcopal Revenues, which I have thus briefly (and perhaps imperfectly) deduced for some Information to those, whose Thoughts do not lead them to such Considerations.

By virtue of the Statute already mentioned under King *Charles* the first, limiting Ecclesiastical Bodies to the Term of twenty one Years, under the reserved Rent of half real Value, the Bishops have had some share in the gradual Rise of Lands, without which they could not have been supported, with any common Decency that might become their Station. It is above eighty Years since the passing of that Act: The See of *Meath*, one of the best in the Kingdom, was then worth about 400 *lib. per Annum*, the poorer ones in the same Proportion. If this were their present Condition, I cannot conceive how they would have been able to pay for their Patents, or buy their Robes; but this will certainly be the Condition of their Successors, if such a Bill should Pass as they say is now intended, which I will suppose and believe many Persons who may give a Vote for it, are not aware of.

However, this is the Act which is now attempted to be repealed, or at least eluded; some are for giving Bishops leave to let Fee-Farms, others would allow them to let Leases for Lives, and the most Moderate would repeal that Clause, by which the Bishops are bound to let their Lands at half value.

The Reasons for the Rise of Value in Lands are of two Kinds. Of the first Kind, are long Peace and Settlement after the Devastations of War; Plantations,

ons, Improvements of bad Soil, Recovery of Bogs and Marshes, Advancement of Trade and Manufactures, Encrease of Inhabitants, Encouragement of Agriculture, and the Like.

But there is another Reason for the Rise of Land, more gradual, constant and certain, which will have its effects in Countries that are very far from flourishing in any of the Advantages I have just mentioned: I mean *the perpetual Decrease in the Value of Gold and Silver*. I shall discourse upon these two different Kinds, with a View towards the Bill now attempted.

As to the First, I cannot see how this Kingdom is at any Height of Improvement, while four Parts in five of the Plantations for 30 Years past, have been real Disimprovements, nine in ten of the Quickset-Hedges being ruined for want of Care or Skill. And as to Forest Trees, they being often taken out of Woods and planted in single Rows on the Tops of Ditches, it is impossible they should grow to be of Use, Beauty, or Shelter. Neither can it be said, that the Soil of *Ireland* is improved to its full Height, while so much lies all Winter under Water, and the Bogs made almost Desperate by the ill Cutting of the Turf. There hath indeed been some little Improvement in the Manufactures of Linen and Woollen, although very short of Perfection; But our Trade was never in so low a Condition: And as to Agriculture, of which all wise Nations have been so tender, the Desolation made in the Country by Engrossing Graziers, and the great yearly Importation of Corn from *England*, are lamentable Instances under what Discouragement it lies.

But

But notwithstanding all these Mortifications, I suppose there is no Well-wisher to his Country without a little Hope, that in Time the Kingdom may be on a better Foot in some of the Articles above mentioned; and it would be hard if Ecclesiastical Bodies should be the only Persons excluded from any share in Publick Advantages, which yet can never happen without a greater share of Profit to their Tenants: If God *sends Rain equally upon the Just and the Unjust*, why should those who wait at his Altars, and are Instructors of the People, be cut off from partaking in the general Benefits of Law or of Nature?

But as this way of Reasoning may seem to bear a more favourable Eye to the Clergy, than perhaps will suit with the present Disposition or Fashion of the Age; I shall therefore dwell more largely upon the Second Reason for the Rise of Land, which is *the perpetual Decrease of the Value of Gold and Silver.*

This may be observed from the Course of the *Roman* History, above two thousand Years before those inexhaustible Silver Mines of *Potosi* were known. The Value of an *Obolus*, and of every other Coin between the Time of *Romulus* and that of *Augustus*, gradually sunk above five parts in six, as appears by several Passages out of the best Authors. And yet the prodigious Wealth of that State did not arise from the Encrease of Bullion in the World, by the Discovery of new Mines, but from a much more accidental Cause, which was the spreading of their Conquests, and thereby Importing into *Rome* and *Italy* the Riches of the *East* and *West*.

When the Seat of Empire was removed to *Constantinople*, the Tide of Money flowed that way without ever returning, and was scattered in *Asia*.

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But when that mighty Empire was overthrown by the Northern People, such a stop was put to all Trade and Commerce, that vast Sums of Money were buried to escape the Plundering of the Conquerors, and what remained was carried off by those Ravagers.

It were no difficult matter to compute the Value of Money in *England* during the *Saxon* Reigns: but the Monkish and other Writers since the Conquest have put that Matter in a clearer Light, by the several Accounts they have given us of the value of Corn and Cattle, in years of Dearth and Plenty. Every one knows that King *John's* whole Portion before he came to the Crown, was but five Thousand Pounds without a Foot of Land.

I have likewise seen the Stewards Accounts, of an Antient Noble Family in *England*, written in Latin, between three and four Hundred Years ago, with the several Prices of Wine and Victuals, to confirm my Observations.

I have been at the Trouble of computing (as others have done) the different Values of Money for about four Hundred Years past. *Henry* Duke of *Lancaster* who lived about that Period, founded an Hospital in *Leicester*, for a certain number of old Men, charging his Lands with a Groat a Week to each for their Maintenance, which is to this Day duly paid them. In those Times, a Penny was equal to Ten Pence Halfpenny, and somewhat more than half a Farthing in ours, which makes about Eight Ninths difference.

This is plain also from the old Custom upon many Estates in *England*, to let for Leases of Lives (renewable at pleasure) where the reserved Rent is usually about Twelve Pence a Pound, which then was
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was near the Half real Value, and although the Fines are not fixed, yet the Landlord gets altogether not above three Shillings in the Pound of the Worth of his Land: And the Tenants are so wedded to this Custom, that if the Owner suffers three Lives to expire, none of them will take a Lease on other Conditions; or if he brings in a Foreigner who will agree to pay a reasonable Rent, the other Tenants by all manner of Injuries will make that Foreigner so uneasie, that he must be forced to quit the Farm; as the late Earl of *Bath* felt by the Experience of above Ten Thousand Pounds Loss.

The Gradual Decrease for about two Hundred Years after was not considerable, and therefore I do not rely on the Account given by some Historians, that *Harry* the Seventh left behind him Eighteen Hundred Thousand Pounds; for although the *West Indies* were discovered before his Death, and although he had the best Talents and Instruments for exacting of Money ever possessed by any Prince since the Time of *Vespasian* (whom he resembled in many Particulars) yet I conceive that in his Days, the whole Coin of *England*, could hardly amount to such a Sum. For in the Reign of *Philip* and *Mary*, Sir—*Cockain* of *Darbyshire*, the best House-keeper of his Quality in the County, allowed his Lady Fifty Pounds a Year for maintaining the Family, one Pound a Year Wages to each Servant, and two Pounds to the Steward; as I was told by a Person of Quality who had seen the Original Account of his Oeconomy: Now this Sum of fifty Pound, added to the Advantages of a large Domain, might be equal to about five Hundred Pound a Year at present, or somewhat more than Four Fifths.

The great Plenty of Silver in *England* began in Queen *Elizabeth's* Reign, when *Drake* and others took vast quantities of Coin and Bullion from the *Spaniards*, either upon their own *American* Coasts, or in their return to *Spain*. However, so much hath been imported Annually from that Time to this, that the Value of Money in *England* and most Parts of *Europe*, is sunk above one half within the space of an Hundred Years, notwithstanding the great Export of Silver for about eighty Years past, to the *East Indies*, from whence it never returns. But Gold being not liable to the same Accident, and by new Discoveries growing every Day more plentiful, seems in danger of becoming a Drug.

This hath been the Progress of the Value of Money in former Ages, and must of Necessity continue so for the Future, without some new Invasion of *Goths* and *Vandals* to destroy Law, Property and Religion, alter the very face of Nature, and turn the World upside down.

I must repeat, that what I am to say upon this Subject is intended only for the Conviction of those among our own Party, who are true Lovers of the Church, and would be glad it should continue in a tolerable Degree of Prosperity to the End of the World.

The Church is supposed to last for ever, both in its Discipline and Doctrine; which is a Privilege common to every petty Corporation, who must likewise observe the Laws of their Foundation. If a Gentleman's Estate which now yields him a thousand Pounds a Year, had been Set for ever at the highest Value even in the flourishing Days of King *Charles* the Second, would it now amount to above four or five Hundred at most? What if this had happened

happened two or three Hundred Years ago, would the reserved Rent at this Day be any more than a small Chiefry? Suppose the Revenues of a Bishop to have been under the same Circumstances, could he now be able to perform Works of Hospitality and Charity? Thus if the Revenues of a Bishop be limited to a Thousand Pounds a Year, how will his Successor be in a Condition to support his Station with Decency, when the same Denomination of Money shall not answer an half, a quarter, or an Eighth part of that Sum? which must unavoidably be the Consequence of any Bill to elude the limiting Act whereby the Church was preserved from utter Ruin.

The same Reason holds good in all Corporations whatsoever, who cannot follow a more pernicious Practice than that of granting Perpetuities, for which many of them smart to this Day, although the Leaders among them are often so stupid as not to perceive it, or sometimes so Knavish as to find their private Account in cheating the Community.

Several Colleges in *Oxford* were aware of this growing Evil about an Hundred Years ago, and instead of limiting their Rents to a certain Sum of Money, prevailed with their Tenants to pay the Price of so many Barrels of Corn, to be valued as the Market went, at two Seasons (as I remember) in the Year. For a Barrel of Corn is of a real intrinsic Value, which Gold and Silver are not; And by this invention, these Colleges have preserved a tolerable Subsistence for their Fellows and Students to this Day.

The present Bishops will indeed be no sufferers by such a Bill, because, their Ages considered, they cannot expect to see any great decrease in the va-

lue of Money ; or at worst they can make it up in the Fines, which will probably be greater than usual upon the Change of Leases into Fee-farms, or Lives, or without the Power of obliging their Tenants to a real half Value. And as I cannot well blame them for taking such Advantages, (considering the Nature of Human kind) when the Question is only whether the Money shall be put into their own or another Man's Pocket ; so they will be never excusable before God or Man, if they do not to the Death oppose, declare, and protest against any such Bill, as must in its Consequences compleat the Ruin of the Church, and of their own Order in this Kingdom.

If the Fortune of a private Person be diminished by the weakness or inadvertency of his Ancestors, in letting Leases for ever at low Rents, the World lies open to his Industry for Purchasing of more ; but the Church is barred by a *dead Hand*, or if it were otherwise, yet the Custom of making Bequests to it, hath been out of Practice for almost two hundred Years, and a *great deal directly contrary* hath been its Fortune.

I have been assured by a Person of some consequence, to whom I am likewise obliged for the account of some other Facts already related, That the late excellent Bishop of *Salisbury*, Dr. *Burnet*, (the greatest *Whig* of that Bench in his days) confessed to him, That the liberty which Bishops in *England* have of letting Leases for Lives, would, in his Opinion, be one Day the Ruin of Episcopacy there ; and thought the Church in this Kingdom happy by the Limitation Act.

And have we not already found the Effect of this different Proceeding in both Kingdoms ? Have not
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two *English* Prelates quitted their Peerage and Seats in Parliament, in a *Nation of Freedom*, for the sake of a more ample Revenue, even in this unhappy Kingdom, rather than lie under the Mortification of living below their Dignity at Home? for which however they cannot be justly censured. I know indeed some Persons who offer as an Argument for repealing the limiting Bill, That it may in future Ages prevent the Practice of providing this Kingdom with Bishops from *England*, when the only Temptation will be removed. And they alledge, that as things have gone for some Years past, Gentlemen will grow discouraged from sending their Sons to the University, and from suffering them to enter into Holy Orders, when they are likely to languish under a Curacy or small Vicarage, to the end of their Lives: But this is all a vain Imagination, for the Decrease in the value of Money will equally affect both Kingdoms: And besides, when Bishopricks here grow too small to invite over Men of Credit and Consequence, they will be left more fully to the disposal of a Chief Governour, who can never fail of a Chaplain fond of a Title and Precedence. Thus will that whole Bench, in an Age or two, be composed of mean, ignorant, fawning Gown-men, humble Suppliants and Dependents upon the *Court* for a Morfel of Bread, and ready to serve every Turn that shall be demanded from them, in hopes of getting some Commendam tacked to their Sees; which must then be the Trade, as it is now too much in *England*, to the great Discouragement of the Inferiour Clergy. Neither is that Practice without Example among us.

It is now about Eighty-five Years since the Passing of that limiting Act, and there is but one Instance

Instance in the memory of Man, of a Bishop's Lease broken upon the Plea of not being Statutable; which in every bodies Opinion, could have been lost by no other Person than he who was then Tenant, and happened to be very ungracious in his County. In the present Bishop of *Meath's* Case, that Plea did not avail, although the Lease were notoriously unstatutable, the Rent reserv'd, being, as I have been told, not a seventh Part of the real Value; yet the Jury upon their Oaths, *very gravely* found it to be according to the Statute; and one of them was heard to say, That he would *eat his Shoes* before he would give a Verdict for the Bishop. A very few more have made the same Attempt with as little Success. Every Bishop and other Ecclesiastical Body, reckon forty Pounds in an hundred, to be a Reasonable half Value, or if it be only a third Part, it seldom or never breeds any difference between Landlord and Tenant. But when the Rent is from five to nine or ten Parts less than the Worth, the Bishop, if he consults the good of his See, will be apt to expostulate; and the Tenant, if he be an honest Man, will have some Regard to the Reasonableness and Justice of the Demand, so as to yield to a moderate Advancement, rather than engage in a Suit, where Law and Equity are directly against him. By these means the Bishops have been so true to their Trusts, as to procure some small share in the Advancement of Rents, although it is notorious that they do not Receive the third Penny (Fines included) of the real Value of their Lands throughout the Kingdom.

I was never able to imagine what Inconvenience could accrue to the Publick by one or two thousand Pounds a Year in the Hands of a Protestant Bishop,

Bishop, any more than of a Lay Person. The former, generally speaking, lives as Piously and Hospitably as the other, pays his Debts as honestly, and spends as much of his Revenue among his Tenants: Besides, if they be his immediate Tenants, you may distinguish them at first sight by their Habits and Horses; or if you go to their Houses, by their comfortable way of living. But the misfortune is, that such immediate Tenants, generally speaking, have others under them, and so a third and fourth in Subordination, till it comes to the *Welder* (as they call him) who sits at a rack Rent, and lives as miserably as an *Irish* Farmer upon a new Lease from a Lay Landlord. But suppose a Bishop happens to be Avaricious (as being composed of the same Stuff with other mortal Men) the Consequence to the Publick is no worse than if he were a Squire; for he leaves his Fortune to a Son, or near Relation, who, if he be Rich enough, will never think of entring into the Church.

And as there can be no Disadvantage to the Publick, in a Protestant Country, that a Man should hold Lands as a *Bishop*, any more than if he were a *Temporal* Person, so it is of great Advantage to the Community, where a Bishop lives as he ought to do. He is bound in Conscience to Reside in his Diocese, and by a solemn Promise, to keep Hospitality; his Estate is spent in the Kingdom, not remitted to *England*, he keeps the Clergy to their Duty, and is an Example of Virtue both to them and the People. Suppose him an ill Man, yet his very Character will withhold him from any great or open Exorbitancies. But in fact, it must be allowed, That the Bishops of this Kingdom, within twenty Years past, have done very signal and lasting

ing Acts of Publick Charity; great Instances whereof are the late and present Primate, his Grace the Lord Arch-Bishop of *Dublin* that now is, who besides the Gratitude his Country owes him, as a most wise and faithful Counsellour, hath left Memorials of his Bounty almost in every part of his Province. I might add the Arch-Bishop of *Cashel*, the Bishop of *Raphoe*, and several others, not forgetting the late Dean of *Down*, *Dr. Pratt*, who bestowed a thousand Pound upon the University: Which Foundation, (that I may observe by the Way) if the Bill proposed should Pass, would be in the same Circumstances with the Bishops, nor ever able again to advance the Stipends of the Fellows and Students, as lately they found it necessary to do; the determinate Sum appointed by the Statutes for Commons, being not half sufficient, by the fall of Money, to afford necessary Sustenance. But the passing of such a Bill must put an end to all Ecclesiastical Beneficence for the Time to come; and whether this will be supplied by those who are to Reap the Benefit, better than it hath been done by the Grantees of Improprate Tythes, who received them upon the old Church Conditions of keeping Hospitality, it will be easy to conjecture.

To alledge, that passing such a Bill would be a good Encouragement to improve Bishops Lands, is a great Error. Is it not the general Method of Landlords to wait the Expiration of a Lease, and then Cant their Lands to the highest Bidder? and what should hinder the same Course to be taken in Church Leases, when the Limitation is removed of paying half the real Value to the Bishop? In riding through the Country, how few Improvements do we see upon the Estates of Laymen, farther than
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about their own Domains? To say the Truth, it is a great Misfortune as well to the Publick as to the Bishops themselves, that their Lands are generally let to Lords and great Squires, who in Reason, were never designed to be Tenants, and therefore may naturally murmur at the Payment of Rent, as a Subserviency they were not born to. If the Tenants to the Church were honest Farmers, they would pay their Fines and Rents with chearfulness, improve their Lands, and thank God they were to give but a Moderate half Value for what they held. I have heard a Man of a Thousand Pounds a Year, talk with great contempt of Bishops Leases, as being on a worse Foot than the rest of his Estate; and he had certainly Reason: My Answer was, that such Leases were originally intended only for the Benefit of Industrious Husbandmen, who would think it a great Blessing to be so provided for, instead of having his Farm screwed up to the Height, not eating one comfortable Meal in a Year, nor able to find Shoes for his Children.

I know not any Advantage that can accrue by such a Bill, except the preventing of Perjury in Jurymen, and false Dealing in Tenants; which is a Remedy like that of giving my Money to an Highway Man before he attempts to take it by force; and so I shall be sure to prevent the Sin of Robbery.

I had wrote thus far, and thought to have put an End; when a Bookseller sent me a small Pamphlet, Entitled, *The Case of the Laity, with some Queries*; full of the strongest Malice against the Clergy, that I have any where met with since the Reign of *Toland* and others of that Tribe. These kinds of Advocates do infinite Mischief to our good Cause, by giving Grounds to the unjust Reproaches of

Tories and Jacobites, who charge us with being Enemies to the Church. If I bear an hearty unfeigned Loyalty to his Majesty King *GEORGE* and the House of *HANOVER*, not shaken in the least by the Hardships we lie under, which never can be imputable to so gracious a Prince; If I sincerely abjure the Pretender and all Popish Successors; If I bear a due Veneration to the Glorious Memory of the late King *WILLIAM*, who preserved these Kingdoms from Popery and Slavery, with the Expence of his Blood, and hazard of his Life: And lastly, if I am for a proper Indulgence to all Dissenters; I think nothing more can be reasonably demanded of *Me* as a *WHIG*, and that my Political Catechism is full and Compleat. But whoever under the Shelter of that Party-Denomination, and of many great Professions of Loyalty, would Destroy, or Undermine, or Injure the *CHURCH* Established, I utterly disown him, and think he ought to chuse another Name of Distinction for himself, and his Adherents. I came into the Cause upon other Principles, which, by the Grace of *GOD*, I mean to preserve as long as I live. Shall we justify the Accusations of our Adversaries? *Hoc Ithacus velit.*—The Tories and Jacobites will behold us with a malicious Pleasure determined upon the Ruin of our *Friends*: For is not the present Set of Bishops almost intirely of that Number, as well as a great Majority of the Principal Clergy? And a short time will reduce the whole, by Vacancies upon Death.

An Impartial Reader, if he pleases to examine what I have already said, will easily answer the bold *Queries* in the Pamphlet I mentioned; he will be convinced, that *the Reason still strongly exists for*
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which that limiting Law was enacted. A Reasonable Man will wonder where can be *the insufferable Grievance* that an *Ecclesiastical* Landlord should expect a moderate or third Part Value in Rent for his Lands, when his Title is *at least* as Antient and as Legal as that of a Lay-man, who is yet but seldom guilty of giving such beneficial Bargains. Has *the Nation been thrown into Confusion*? And have *many poor Families been Ruined* by Rack Rents pay'd for the Lands of the Church? Does *the Nation cry out* to have a Law that must in time send their Bishops a Begging? But God be thanked, the *Clamour* of Enemies to the Church is not yet the Cry, and I hope will never prove the *Voice* of the Nation. The Clergy, I conceive, will hardly allow that *the People maintain them*, any more than in the Sense that all Landlords whatsoever are maintained by the People. Such Assertions as these, and the Insinuations they carry along with them, proceed from Principles which cannot be avowed by those who are for preserving the *Happy Constitution* in Church and State. Whoever were the Proposer of such *Queries*, it might have provoked a bold Writer to Retaliate, perhaps with more Justice than Prudence, by shewing, at whose Door the Grievance lies, and that the Bishops *at least* are not to Answer for the Poverty of Tenants.

To gratifie this great Reformer, who enlarges the *Episcopal* Rent-Roll almost one half, let me suppose that all the Church Lands in the Kingdom were thrown up to the Laity, Would the Tenants in such a Case, sit easier in their Rents than they do now? Or, would the Money be equally spent in the Kingdom? No: The Farmer would be screwed up to the utmost Penny by the Agents and Stewards of

Absentees, and the Revenues employed in making a Figure at *London*; to which City a full third Part of the whole *Income* of *Ireland* is Annually returned to answer that single *Article* of *Maintenance* for *Irish* Landlords.

Another of his Quarrels is against *Pluralities* and *Non-Residence*; As to the Former, it is a Word of ill Name, but not well understood. The Clergy having been stripped of the greatest Part of their Revenues, the *Glebes* being generally lost, the *Tithes* in the Hands of Laymen, the Churches Demolished, and the Country Depopulated; in order to preserve a Face of *Christianity*, it was necessary to unite small *Vicarages* sufficient to make a tolerable Maintenance for a *Minister*. The Profit of Ten or a Dozen of these *Unions*, do seldom amount to above Eighty or an Hundred Pounds a Year: If there be a very few *Dignitaries*, whose Preferments are perhaps more liable to this Accusation, it is to be supposed they may be *Favourites of the Time* or Persons of *Superiour Merit*, for whom there hath ever been some Indulgence in all Governments.

As to *Non-Residence*, I believe there is no Christian Country upon Earth, where the Clergy have less to answer for upon that *Article*. I am confident there are not Ten Clergy-men in the Kingdom, who properly speaking, can be termed *Non-Residents*: For surely we are not to reckon in that Number, those, who for want of *Glebes*, are forced to retire to the nearest Neighbouring Village for a *Cabin* to put their Heads in; the Leading Man of the Parish, when he makes the greatest Clamour, being least disposed to Accommodate the *Minister* with an Acre of Ground. And indeed, considering the *Difficulties* the Clergy lie under upon this Head;

it hath been frequent Matter of Wonder to *Me*, how they are able to perform that Part of their Duty as well as they do.

There is a Noble Author who hath lately Addressed to the House of COMMONS an excellent Discourse for the *Encouragement of Agriculture*, full of most useful *Hints*, which I hope that Honourable ASSEMBLY will consider as they Deserve. I am not a Stranger to His L ——— p, and excepting in what relates to the Church, there are few Persons, with whose Opinions I am better pleased to agree, and am therefore grieved when I find him charging the Inconveniencies in the Payment of *Tythes* upon the *Clergy* and their *Proctors*. His L ——— p is above considering a very known and vulgar Truth, that the meanest Farmer hath all manner of Advantages against the most *Powerful* Clergymen, by whom it is impossible he can be wronged, although the *Minister* were ever so evil disposed; the whole System of *Teazing*, *Perplexing*, and *Defrauding* the *Proctor* or his *Master* being as well known to every *Plow-Man*, as the Reaping or Sowing of his Corn, and much more Artfully Practised. Besides, the Leading Man in the Parish must have his *Tythes* at his own Rate, which is hardly ever above one Quarter of the Value. And I have heard it computed by many skilful Observers whose Interest was not concerned, that the Clergy did not receive throughout the Kingdom, one half of what the Laws have made their Due.

As to his L ——— p's Discontent against the *Bishops-Courts*, I shall not interpose further than in venturing my private Opinion, that the Clergy would be very glad to recover their Just *Dues* by a more short, *Decisive* and *Compulsive* Method than such a Cramped and limited Jurisdiction will allow.

His L——p is not the only Person disposed to give the Clergy the Honour of being the *Sole* Encouragers of all new Improvements. If *Hops, Hemp, Flax*, and *Twenty Things* more are to be planted, the Clergy *alone* must reward the Industrious Farmer, by Abatement of the *Tythe*. What if the Owners of Nine Parts in Ten would please to abate proportionably in his Rent for every Acre thus improv'd? Would not a Man just dropt from the Clouds, upon a full hearing, judge the Demand to be at least as Reasonable?

I believe no Man will dispute his L——p's Title to his Estate; nor will I, the *Jus Divinum* of *Tithes*, which he mentions with some Emotion. I suppose the Affirmative would be of little Advantage to the Clergy, for the same Reason that a *Maxim in Law* hath more weight in the World, than an *Article of Faith*. And yet I think there may be such a Thing as *Sacrilege*, because it is frequently mentioned by *Greek* and *Roman* Authors, as well as described in *Holy Writ*. This I am sure of; That his L——p would at any time excuse a P A R L I A M E N T for not concerning it Self in His Properties, without His own Consent.

The Observations I have made upon his L——p's Discourse have not, I confess, been altogether proper to my Subject; However since he hath been pleased therein to offer some Proposals to the House of Commons with relation to the Clergy, I hope he will excuse me for differing from him, which proceeds from his own Principle, the Desire of defending *Liberty* and *Property*, that he hath so strenuously and constantly maintained.

But the other Writer openly declares for a Law, empowering the Bishops to set *Fee-Farms*, and says, *Whoever intimates that they will deny their Consent to such a Reasonable Law, which the whole Nation cries for, are Enemies to them and the Church.* Whether this be his real Opinion, or only a strain of Mirth and Irony, the Matter is not much. However, my Sentiments are so directly contrary to his, that I think whoever impartially reads and considers what I have written upon this Argument, has either no Regard for the Church Established under the Hierarchy of Bishops, or will never consent to any Law that shall repeal, or elude the limiting Clause relating to the real half Value contained in the Act of Parliament, *Decimo Caroli, For the preservation of the Inheritance, Rights and Profits of Lands belonging to the Church, and Persons Ecclesiastical*, which was grounded upon Reasons that do still, and must for ever subsist.

Octob. 21,

1723.

FINIS.

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